

# President/CEO *Report*

..... A monthly report on Ranch Ehrlo Society's activities .....

## ***Blazing a new trail***

issue 59, June 2011

Over 90 people gathered at the West Harvest Inn in Regina on June 15, 2011 to participate in the amalgamation of Ehrlo Community Services Inc. and the Ranch Ehrlo Society.

commended the members of the Ehrlo Community Services board for their dedication to the agency. "Thank you all for the great experience."

Three consecutive meetings were held which saw the membership of both agencies approve unaudited year-end financial statements and pass resolutions agreeing to the amalgamation. The membership of the amalgamated agency then passed a set of by-laws and elected a new board of directors.

Jim Kenyon, as the new chair of the amalgamated agency, spoke about the strengthened organization and the vital role it will play in the community. "I know that the Ranch will continue to play a leadership role in the areas of child welfare, counselling, affordable housing, and inner-city sports and recreation." He also thanked all the employees for the difficult but rewarding work that they do.

The officers of the amalgamated agency are Jim Kenyon, chair, Deb Jordan, past-chair, Cyril Kesten, vice-chair, Art Wakabayashi, treasurer, and Deb McKague, secretary.

Dr. Geoff Pawson reflected on the beginning of the agency 45 years ago. "The agency has grown from one program with approximately 20 employees in 1966 to multiple programs today with over 700 employees. In 1966 the budget for the agency was \$200,000; the projected budget for next year is close to \$50 million."

Deb Jordan, as outgoing Ranch Ehrlo board chair, paid tribute to Dr. Geoff Pawson and his wife Barbara, for their vision 45 years ago in establishing the agency. "They saw a need in the community and they created a trail that we were all able to join. Today we are beginning another part of the journey; together we're blazing a new trail to better serve youth and families in this province."

Pawson also reviewed the continuum of services for the amalgamated agency, ranging from early learning programs at one end of the spectrum, to life-span residential at the other.

Andrea Seale, outgoing Ehrlo Community Services chair, commended the staff of both agencies on their excellent work and for putting a very positive face on the organization. She paid special tribute to Malcolm Neill, former vice-president of Ehrlo Community Services, for all his assistance and support. She also

The amalgamation is effective June 1, 2011. As the Ranch Ehrlo Society has a long, positive history in the province it was agreed that the amalgamated agency retain the name.

For more information on the amalgamation and on the Ranch Ehrlo Society go to [www.ehrlo.com](http://www.ehrlo.com).

*During the course of any month, there are a number of activities which occur that go unreported to Board Members, our Senate, key Stakeholders and staff. This bi-monthly newsletter will attempt to capture some of that activity and give you a broader perspective on Ranch Ehrlo and Ehrlo Community Services.*

Dr. Geoff Pawson  
President/CEO

## ***Resident feedback survey***

Overall, approximately 85% of residents are satisfied with the programs and services they receive at Ranch Ehrlo according to a recent resident feedback survey. “Resident feedback provides the agency with an opportunity to understand the residents’ satisfaction with a variety of programs and services that they receive,” said Andrea Antonishen, program director, who helped coordinate the survey results. “Specifically, resident feedback is used to identify areas of strength and good practice as well as areas that require improvement within the agency.”

*“Resident feedback is used to identify areas of strength and good practice as well as areas that require improvement within the agency.”*

*Andrea Antonishen*

From February through to April, 214 residents, who voluntarily participated in the verbal interview process, indicated that they were benefitting from residential services and programs at the agency.

Residents reported that they felt safe (77%) and comfortable (73%) in their living environment; that planned activities are fun (71%); that they have an

opportunity to participate in traditional activities (84%); that staff members talk with them about making better choice (90%); and that they have family members involved with their programs (83%).

Overall residents report a high level of satisfaction with their interactions with staff members: 89% perceive staff members as friendly; 90% feel they are treated with respect; and 90% believe that the staff cares about them.

Areas for further attention include greater youth involvement in goal setting and service planning.

In August residents will have the opportunity to participate in a survey pertaining to summer programming, and in November, residents will be surveyed about their perceptions of their educational or vocational programming.

## ***Powwow club celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary***

The Ranch Ehrlo Powwow club, which meets every week during the school year, is celebrating 20 years of operation. The success of the program, one of the longest running at the Ranch, is based on the solid foundation and commitment by previous Powwow club coordinators Hayley Maurer and Laura Logan, who each served as coordinators for 10 years.

Nick Crighton is the current coordinator and Yaya Siggins, his assistant. “Powwow singing and dancing provides an opportunity for many of the youth to learn and practice their First Nations customs and traditions,” said Crighton. “Along with teaching traditional dancing, it teaches respect and humility. It is physically demanding so it helps not only build self-confidence and self-esteem, it improves stamina and physical fitness.”

*“Along with teaching traditional dancing, it teaches respect and humility.”*

*Nick Crighton*

The club performs at many events in Regina such as the Spring Free from Racism event, career fairs, and school assemblies. June is a busy month for the club with three performances. The club performed at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre on Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> and at the National Aboriginal Day celebrations at the University of Regina on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The

club members will have an opportunity to showcase their dancing and singing skills for the last time this year on Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> to the Ranch Ehrlo youth and staff at Awards Night at the Conexus Arts Centre.

“Powwow dancing has given many of the youth an opportunity to learn their traditions, make healthy choices, and learn new skills,” added Crighton. “Everyone who has been involved with the club has worked very hard to ensure its success.”

For more information on the Powwow club or cultural activities contact Nick Crighton at [nick.crighton@ranchehro.ca](mailto:nick.crighton@ranchehro.ca) or at 781-1828.

## ***Youth assist flood-stricken neighbour***

On Friday April 15<sup>th</sup>, Shantelle Peterson, the administrative assistant at the Buckland campus, received a distressing phone call advising that a neighbour was in crisis with the Shell River flooding her home. Randy O'Shaughnessy, senior director, called a group meeting of the youth from Klassen House after they arrived home from school to see if they would be willing to help.

"I initially thought this might be a tough sell," said O'Shaughnessy. "The kids had a long week, it was a very cold and miserable day, and some exciting plans for the day lay ahead." But O'Shaughnessy need not have worried. As soon as he mentioned that some neighbours were in trouble they were all eager to assist. "It was another moment which instilled a great sense of pride in our youth."

*"It was another moment which instilled a great sense of pride in our youth."*

*Randy  
O'Shaughnessy*

The nine youth and four staff arrived on the scene and started filling sandbags immediately. Chris Shynkaruk, maintenance technician, brought his truck over so the youth loaded the truck with sandbags and then he drove it through the floodwater.

The youth filled 250 sandbags and when the sand pile was gone returned to Buckland campus, which is very sandy, and continued to fill more sandbags. They filled enough sandbags that the house and garage were completely dammed off and had some left over for good measure.

When they arrived home, the youth were concerned about the neighbour and her helpers looking tired and hungry. They told them that they had been sandbagging for two days and were exhausted. When the group went back in the evening they had with them a meal of sandwiches and rice krispie treats for their very appreciative and very grateful neighbours.

## ***Funds raised for Cystic Fibrosis***

On May 29<sup>th</sup> residents, staff, and families of the Supported Living Program (SLP) A participated in the Cystic Fibrosis 'Great Strides Walk for the Cure' in Regina. Participants raised \$885.

SLP A has made Cystic Fibrosis its charity of choice and will be conducting events throughout the year in support of this cause. SLP A will be expanding its baking program and holding several bake sales throughout the year to raise funds.

For more information or to assist in supporting this initiative contact Daren Haygarth, program manager, at [daren.haygarth@ranchehrlo.ca](mailto:daren.haygarth@ranchehrlo.ca).

## ***Concert proceeds to support Ranch Ehrlo***

Last fall, Canadian country music star, Johnny Reid, undertook a cross country concert tour to help raise funds and awareness for abused and neglected children and youth in this country.

Reid teamed up with the Children's Aid Foundation to sell a custom teddy bear at all his concerts with 100% of the proceeds going to help children and youth in need. The Children's Aid Foundation, which has a long-standing partnership with the Ranch Ehrlo Society, designated the funds from Reid's five Saskatchewan concerts to be directed to the agency.

Marion MacIver, executive vice-president, who served as the liaison with the foundation, reports that the proceeds from the sales at the Saskatchewan concerts totaled \$16,318. A number of projects are currently being reviewed including replacing playground equipment at one of the agency's affordable housing units.

## ***New website***

The amalgamation of the Ranch Ehrlo Society and Ehrlo Community Services has resulted in the launching of a new website that provides up-to-date information on the residential programs and services as well as those offered in the community. It is one-stop shopping! Check us out at [www.ehrlo.com](http://www.ehrlo.com).

## ***Annual three-mile runs***

The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual three-mile race was held at the Pilot Butte campus on Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> under clear sunny skies. Approximately 200 runners, joggers, and walkers participated in the race, including 13 day old Kye Hamilton, who was pushed along by dad, David Hamilton, unit manager at Kruzeniski. The race was followed by a beef barbeque meal and the presentation of awards. Congratulations to Nick Endicott, son of Ranch employees Brad and Kirsten Endicott, for the fastest time.

The three-mile run for Programs North was held on May 31<sup>st</sup> at the Corman Park campus. Approximately 65 youth, staff, visitors, and board members participated in the race which was followed by a great meal of barbecued burgers and hot dogs and the presentations of awards. Congratulations to Dillon McNab, a special guest, who beat out the competition in 18:41 minutes.

## ***Lieutenant Governor's visit***

The Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Gordon Barnhart, joined the youth, staff and executive at the Buckland campus on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> to celebrate *Western Days*.

The event was an opportunity for the agency to showcase its beautiful northern campus, including the new riding arena. The afternoon began with the vice-regal salute and was followed by motivational remarks by His Honour who encouraged the young people to follow their dreams and to never give-up hope. In addition to touring the arena and the campus, His Honour enjoyed performances by Buckland riding club, both in the arena and in the outdoor corals.

The afternoon concluded with a great meal of old-fashioned western food. His Honour got into the fun of the event in dressing up in old-fashion western attire for a photo shoot with the youth and staff.

The Lieutenant Governor was accompanied by his aide-de-camp Ken Black, former Ranch Ehrlo board member and long time member of the Ranch Ehrlo senate.

## ***RAGS presentation***

Over 100 Ranch Ehrlo students and staff attended a presentation by Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS) at Schaller School on Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>.

Preston Henry, a caseworker with the program, provided an overview of the gang awareness initiative. The name RAGS was chosen by the youth involved in setting the direction, RAGS being the slang term used to describe the coloured bandanas worn to show gang affiliation.

The audience then heard from two former gang members. Both presenters talked about their experiences in gangs and showed a video. They talked about strategies to exit from a gang and the importance of making positive choices. Many young people are lured into gangs to feel part of a community or family. However, unlike a healthy family, the gangs are never there for you when you need them.

Hayley Maurer, principal, who helped organize the presentation, was pleased with the turnout and the response. "We're always concerned about the lure of gang membership with our students," said Maurer. "We were hoping the presenters would dispel some of the myths and educate the youth."

The feedback from the students and staff was very positive. "The presentation was over two hours and the students were really, really attentive throughout," added Maurer.

## ***Awards Night in Prince Albert***

Approximately 230 guests attended the fifth annual Awards Night for Programs North held on June 16<sup>th</sup> at the Art Hauser Centre in Prince Albert. This year for the fourth time, students and staff from the Corman Park campus participated in the event.

In bringing greetings on behalf of the agency, Dr. Geoff Pawson welcomed the students, staff, and families.

The evening opened with a delicious banquet, followed by award presentations, and entertainment by the youth.

## ***Alliance Benchmarking***

The Ranch Ehrlo Society is a member of the Alliance for Children and Families, an international association of private, non-profit, human services organizations throughout North America.

“In addition to providing a national peer network and access to material on best practices, the membership allows us to participate in benchmark initiatives through Behavioural Pathways Systems,” said Carole Bryant, vice-president of administration and quality improvement. “The Alliance benchmarking report for the last quarter of 2010 shows the agency as being a ‘top performer’ in a number of areas including occupancy, management to staff ratios, retention, and number of restraints.”

The Alliance Benchmarking initiative is one of many initiatives at the Ranch Ehrlo Society which ensures quality programming and services are delivered to all clients.

For more information on the agency’s quality improvement program go to [www.ehrlo.com](http://www.ehrlo.com).

## ***Recognizing Youth’s Achievements***

The 45<sup>th</sup> Ranch Ehrlo Society (Programs South) Awards Night is scheduled for Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Conexus Arts Centre.

Approximately 750 guests are expected to attend the annual event that involves the presentation of awards to youth for a variety of accomplishments during the year. This year there are a total of 330 nominations and 52 awards presented.

For the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, SaskTel will be the official sponsor the event.

## ***Ranch youth have impact on Martin Collegiate***

The first Ranch Ehrlo classroom opened in Martin Collegiate in the 2007-2008 school-year, and expanded to two classrooms in September 2008. Since then dozens of Ranch Ehrlo youth have

entered the halls of Martin and have made a significant impact on the school environment.

Chris Henderson, one of the Ranch Ehrlo teachers at the school, canvassed the other teachers about how the Ranch program fit into Martin. The response was overwhelmingly positive. One teacher found the “Ranch students to be respectful and polite and willing to try new things in class.” Another noted that “I enjoy working with Ranch Ehrlo students because these young people come from many places around Canada and they bring with them a different perspective.” The staff also appreciates the Ranch support staff in the school to help with adaptive programming, suggestions, and other supports.

“The Ranch Ehrlo staff at Martin has worked hard to provide a strong program, and the support of Regina Public Schools and the staff at Martin have made the school an ideal place for our program,” said Henderson. “We are excited about our partnership in the program, and will continue to build on the positive reputation of Ranch Ehrlo.”

## ***Ehrlo Basketball league wraps-up another successful season***

Over 100 children and youth participated in the 2011 Ehrlo Basketball season, which had its wrap-up tournament on June 11<sup>th</sup> at the University of Regina.

“We were very happy to have DoggPound Basketball Academy mentor the youth again this year as well as have the City of Regina support our league,” said Laura Logan, manager of the Ehrlo Sport Venture programs.

## ***Avant-Garde to host open house***

Avant-Garde College will be hosting its second annual wine and cheese open house on June 29<sup>th</sup> to allow students, salon owners, and industry stakeholders to network while learning about the college. Last year the attendance was high and every student had either an interview or employment arranged by the end of the evening.

For information contact [lori.pawson@ranchehrlo.ca](mailto:lori.pawson@ranchehrlo.ca)

## ***Ehrlo Sport Venture welcomes new employee***

Brett Kannenberg, a University of Regina education student, assumed the position of community recreation worker with the Ehrlo Sport Venture programs on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Kannenberg, who volunteered with the football and hockey leagues last year, is a sports enthusiast and eager to gain some valuable experience working with community children and youth.

“It’s experience you can only gain from programs like Sport Venture,” said Kannenberg. “The knowledge I’m gaining from this will further my education and outlook, allowing me to become a better and informed teacher.”

## ***Celebrating educational achievement***

Ryan Labatt, consultant at Ehrlo Counselling, convoked on June 8<sup>th</sup> with a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. Since joining the agency in the fall of 2005, Labatt has worked in the disability area as a consultant with the Saskatchewan Cognitive Disability Strategy. Prior to that, he worked for the provincial government in youth justice and child welfare programs.

“A lack of safe and affordable housing continues to be a major barrier for the cognitively challenged people I work with,” said Labatt. “My future goal is to work in this area. There is a great deal of creative energy and will in our community to address housing challenges and the Ranch is a leader in the area.”

While in school last year, Labatt’s major focus was on housing, culminating in his final project which was a transitional outreach program model for addictions services at the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region. A significant aspect of the model is to transition people from addictions into stable housing.

“Ranch Ehrlo provided me with an amazing opportunity to pursue my MSW and I am very appreciative of this,” said Labatt in summing up the experience.

## ***Pre-trade construction group***

Ranch Ehrlo Society has secured funding to deliver pre-trades construction training for a group of six individuals beginning July 4, 2011. The funding was provided from Service Canada and Can Sask Career and Employment Services. Participants will receive 25 weeks of paid training on the job in the construction industry. Upon completion, they can expect to secure employment in the construction industry and possibly move in to further training with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology as Level 1 apprentice carpenters.

“The booming Saskatchewan economy means many jobs in construction for those with the right skills,” explained Monica Rivers, vocational resource coordinator.

Under the experienced guidance and support of Journeyman, Darwin Gettle of the Ranch Ehrlo Society, and through an effective partnership with Construction Careers Regina, the young men and women in this program are ensured that they have the right skills and support they need to successfully transition into the construction trade.

## ***Social Connections***

Sport Venture programs have entered into a partnership with the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region to provide children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with a variety of rich experiences. The program, which is being called *Social Connections*, promotes social development, healthy living, and improves motor skills through sports, recreation, and numerous art-related activities.

“The program has thus far been a great success,” said Laura Logan, manager. “Staff realized that socializing was not going to be a major concern once they found common ground.”

“When one of the groups broke into the chorus of ‘Sponge Bob Square Pants’ we knew finding these links would not be difficult,” said Logan chuckling.

For more information on *Social Connections*, contact Laura Logan, manager of Sport Venture at [laura.logan@ranchehrlo.ca](mailto:laura.logan@ranchehrlo.ca) or 751-2411.